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MY CABIN MATES AND BEDFELLOWS:

A SKETCH OF LIFE ON THE COAST OF AFRICA.

I WAS idly sauntering along the only street in Simon's Town one fine day in June, when I met my little, fat, good-humoured friend, Paymaster Pumpkin. He was walking at an enormous pace for the length of his legs, and his round face was redder than ever. He would hardly stop to tell me that H.M.S. *Vesuvius* was ordered off in two hours—provisions for a thousand men—the Kaffirs (scoundrels) had crossed some river (name unpronounceable) with an army of one hundred thousand men, and were on their way to Cape Town, with the murderous intention of breaking every human bone in that fair town, and probably picking them leisurely afterwards. The upshot of all this, as far as I was concerned, was my being appointed to as pretty a model, and as dirty a little craft, as there is in the service, namely, H.M.S. *Pen-gun*. Our armament consisted of four pea-shooters and one Mons Meg; and our orders were to repair to the east coast of Africa, and there pillage, burn, and destroy every floating thing that dared to carry a slave, without permission from Britannia's queen. Of our adventures there, and how we ruled the waves, I am at present going to say nothing. I took up my commission as surgeon of this interesting craft, and we soon after did what Vanderdecken can't do—rounded the Cape.

On first stepping on board the *Pen-gun*, a task which was by no means difficult to a person with legs of even moderate length, my nose—yes, reader, my nose—that interesting portion of my physiognomy, which for months before had inhaled nothing more nauseous than the perfume of a thousand heaths, the odour of a thousand roses, or the delicious steam of Mr Grout's inimitable punch—my nose was assailed by a smell which burst upon my astonished senses like a compound of asafetida, turpentine, Stilton cheese, and dissecting-rooms. As I gasped for breath, the lieutenant in command endeavoured to console me by saying: 'Oh, it's only the cockroaches; you'll get used to it by and by.'

'Only the cockroaches!' repeated I to myself, as I went below to look after my cabin. This last I found to be of the following dimensions—namely, five feet high (I am five feet ten), six feet long, and six feet broad at the top; but, owing to the curve of the vessel's side, only two feet broad at the deck. A cot hung fore and aft along the ship's side; and the remaining furniture consisted of a doll's chest of drawers, beautifully fitted up on top with a contrivance to hold utensils of lavation, and a Lilliputian writing-table on the other; thus diminishing my available space to two square feet, and this too in a break-neck position. My cot, too, was very conveniently placed for receiving the water which trickled freely from my scuttle when the wind blew, and more slowly when the wind didn't; so that every night, very much against my will, I was put under the operations of practical hydropathy. And this was my *sanctum sanctorum*; but had it been clean, or capable of cleaning, I am a philosopher, and would have rejoiced in it; but it was neither; and ugh! it was inhabited.

Being, what is termed in medical parlance, of the nervo-sanguineous temperament, my horror of the loathsome things about me for the first week almost drove me into a fever. I could not sleep at night, or if I fell into an uneasy slumber, I was awakened from fearful dreams, to find some horrid thing creeping or running over my hands or face. When a little boy, I used to be fond of turning up stones in green meadows, to feast my eyes upon the many creeping horrors beneath. I felt now as if I myself were living under a stone. However, after a year's slaver-hunting, I got so used to all these creatures, that I did not mind them a bit. I could crack scorpions, bruise the heads of centipedes, laugh at earwigs, be delighted with ants, eat weevils, admire tarantulas, encourage spiders; and, if a three-inch-long cockroach entered my mouth, with the kind intention of doing duty as a toothpick, bite the brute in two, and while one end ran off, expectorate the other after it. As for mosquitoes, flies, and all the smaller genera, I had long since been thoroughly

inoculated; and they could now bleed me as much as they thought proper, without my being aware of it. It is of the habits of some of these familiar friends I purpose giving a short sketch.

Of the 'gentlemen of England who live at home at ease,' very few, I suspect, would know a cockroach, although they found the animal in their soup—as I have done more than once. Cockroaches are of two principal kinds—the small, nearly an inch long; and the large, nearly two and a half inches. Let the reader fancy to himself a common horse-fly of our own country, half an inch in breadth, and of the length just stated, the body, ending in two forks, which project beyond the wings, the head, furnished with powerful mandibles, and two feelers, nearly four inches long, and the whole body of a dark-brown or gun-barrel colour, and he will have as good an idea as possible of the gigantic cockroach. The legs are of enormous size and strength, taking from fifteen to twenty ants to carry one away, and furnished with bristles, which pierce the skin in their passage over one's face; and this sensation, together with the horrid smell they emit, is generally sufficient to awaken a sleeper of moderate depth. On these legs the animal squats, walking with his elbows spread out, like a practical agriculturist writing an amatory epistle to his lady-love, except when he raises the forepart of his body, which he does at times, in order the more conveniently to stare you in the face. He prefers walking at a slow and respectable pace; but if you threaten him by shaking your fist at him, or using opprobrious terms to him, it is very funny to see how quickly he takes the hint, and hurries off with all his might. What makes him seem more ridiculous is, that he does not appear to take into consideration the comparative length of your legs; he seems impressed with the idea that he can easily run away from you; indeed, I have no doubt he would do so from a greyhound. The creature is possessed of large eyes; and there is a funny expression of conscious guilt and impudence about his angular face which is very amusing; he knows very well that he lives under a ban—that, in fact, existence is a thing he has no business or lawful right with, and consequently he can never look you straight in the face, like an honest fly or moth. The eggs, which are nearly half an inch long, and about one-eighth in breadth, are rounded at the upper edge, and the two sides approach, wedge-like, to form the lower edge, which is sharp and serrated, for attachment to the substance on which they may chance to be deposited. These eggs are attached by one end to the body of the cockroach; and when fully formed, they are placed upon any material which the wisdom of the mother deems fit food for the youthful inmates. This may be either a dress-coat, a cocked-hat, a cork, a biscuit, or a book, in fact, anything softer than stone; and the egg is no sooner laid, than it begins to sink through the substance below it, by an eating or dissolving process, which is probably due to the agency of some free acid; thus, sailors very often

(I may say invariably) have their finest uniform-coats and dress-pants ornamented by numerous little holes, better adapted for purposes of ventilation than embellishment. The interior of the egg is transversely divided into numerous cells, each containing the larva of I know not how many infant cockroaches. The egg gives birth in a few weeks to a whole brood of triangular little beetles, which gradually increase till they attain the size of huge oval beetles, striped transversely black and brown, but as yet minus wings. These are usually considered a different species, and called the beetle-cockroach; but having a suspicion of the truth, I one day imprisoned one of these in a crystal tumbler, and by and by had the satisfaction of seeing, first the beetle break his own back, and secondly, a large winged cockroach scramble, with a little difficulty, through the wound, looking rather out of breath from the exertion. On first escaping, he was perfectly white, but in a few hours got photographed down to his own humble brown colour. So much for the appearance of these gentry; now for their character, which may easily be summed up: they are cunning as the fox; greedy as the glutton; impudent as sin; cruel, treacherous, cowardly scoundrels; addicted to drinking; arant thieves; and not only eat each other, but even devour with avidity their own legs, when they undergo accidental amputation. They are very fond of eating the toe-nails; so fond, indeed, as to render the nail-scissors of no value, and they also profess a penchant for the epidermis—if I may be allowed a professional expression—of the feet and legs; not that they object to the skin of any other part of the body, by no means; they attack the legs merely on a principle of easy come-at-ability.

In no way is their cunning better exhibited than in the cautious and wary manner in which they conduct their attack upon a sleeper. We will suppose you have turned in to your swinging cot, tucked in your toes, and left one arm uncovered, to guard your face. By and by, first a few spies creep slowly up the bulkhead, and have a look at you: if your eyes are open, they slowly retire, trying to look as much at their ease as possible; but if you look round, they run off with such ridiculous haste, and awkward length of steps, as to warrant the assurance that they were up to no good. Pretend, however, to close your eyes, and soon after, one bolder than the rest, walks down the pillow, and stations himself at your cheek, in an attitude of silent and listening meditation. Here he stands for a few seconds, then cautiously lowering one feeler, he tickles your face: if you remain quiescent, the experiment is soon repeated; if you are still quiet, then you are supposed to be asleep, and the work of the night begins. The spy walks off in great haste, and soon returns with the working-party. The hair is now searched for drops of oil; the ear is examined for wax; in sound sleepers, even the mouth undergoes scrutiny; and every exposed part is put under the operation of gentle skinning. Now is the time to start up, and batter the bulkheads with your slipper; you are sure of half an hour's good sport; but what then; the noise made by the brutes running off brings out the rest; and before you are aware, every crevice or corner

vomits forth its thousands, and the bulkheads all around are covered with racing, chasing, fighting, squabbling cockroaches. So numerous, indeed, they are at times, that it would be no exaggeration to say that every square foot contains its dozen. If you are wise, you will let them alone, and go quietly and philosophically to bed, for you may kill hundreds, and hundreds more will come to the funeral-feast. So the sailors say: 'Let them sweat,' and sweat they do, and the least said about *that* the better. Cockroaches are cannibals, practically and by profession. This can be proved in many ways. They eat the dead bodies of their slain comrades; and if any one of them gets sick or wounded, his companions, with a kindness and consideration which cannot be too highly appreciated, speedily put him out of pain, and, by way of reward for their own trouble, devour him. They have a decided relish for port wine. Seeing a large cockroach one day standing on the top of a bottle of wine, part of which had been recently used, engaged in sipping what still adhered about the mouth, I pinned him to the cork by means of a fine needle. At first, he spun madly round and round on his pivot, but very soon tiring of this exercise, and no doubt giving himself up for lost, he seemed to think he could not do better than drown his misery in the wine-cup, and in fact die drunk. Accordingly, he recommenced the imbibition of the vinous fluid, as coolly as though nothing had occurred to interrupt his enjoyment. I was just thinking of extracting the needle, when another cockroach, who had no doubt observed his helpless condition, and determined to profit by it, crawled up, and attacked him in the rear. The other wheeled about, and stood on the defensive, and a very interesting and exciting fight took place; the attacking party endeavouring to get up behind, and the attacked wheeling round on the needle, in order to keep his front to the foe, and dealing the assailant such powerful blows as to keep him for the time effectually at bay. Round and round the bottle's mouth whirled the couple, fighting with such determination and spirit, that there seemed little likelihood of the fight coming to a speedy termination; and there is no knowing how the battle *would* have been decided, had not other two brave and warlike 'roaches, scenting the battle from afar, suddenly appeared on the field, and taken part against the unhappy wine-bibber. He was now simultaneously attacked in front and rear, and very soon his struggles were over. His wings were rent in ribbons; then one leg, then another, was torn off; and he was in a fair way to be eaten alive, had I not at that instant placed the bottle gently in a basin of water, and pouring a tumbler of the same fluid over them, drowned the whole three, and thus ended the unequal and unnatural contest.

These creatures seem to suffer from a state of chronic thirst; they are continually going and returning from the wash-hand basin, and very careful they are, too, not to tumble in. They watch, sailor-like, the motion of the vessel; when the water flows towards them, they take a few sips, and then wait cautiously while it recedes and returns. Yet, for all this caution, accidents do happen, and every morning you are certain to find from thirty to forty drowned in the basin during the night. This forms one of the many methods of catching them. I will only mention two other methods in common use. A pickle-bottle, containing a little

sugar and water, is placed in the cabin; the animals crawl in, but are unable to get out until the bottle is nearly full, when a few manage to escape, after the manner of the fox in the fable of the 'Fox and Goat in the Well;' and if those who thus escape have previously promised to pull their friends out by the long feelers, they very unfeelingly decline, and walk away as quickly as possible, sadder and wiser 'roaches. When the bottle is at length filled, it finds its way overboard. Another method is adopted in some ships—the boys have to muster every morning with a certain number of cockroaches; if they have more, they are rewarded; if less, punished. I have heard of vessels being fumigated, or sunk in harbour; but in these cases the number of dead cockroaches, fast decaying in tropical weather, generally causes fever to break out in the ship; so that, if a vessel once gets over-run with them, nothing short of dry-docking and taking to pieces does any good.

They are decided drunkards. I think they prefer brandy; but they are not difficult to please, and generally prefer whatever *you* prefer. When a cockroach gets drunk, he becomes very lively indeed, runs about, flaps his wings, and tries to fly—a mode of progression which, except in very hot weather, they are unable to perform. Again and again he returns to the liquor, till at last he falls asleep, and by and by awakes, and no doubt filled with remorse at having fallen a victim to so human a weakness, rushes frantically away, and drowns himself.

But although the cockroach is, in general, the blood-thirsty and vindictive being that I have described, still he is by no means unsocial, and *has* his times and seasons of merriment and recreation. On these occasions, the 'roaches emerge from their hiding-places in thousands at some preconcerted signal, perform a reel, or rather an acute-angled, spherically-trigonometrical quadrille, to the music of their own buzz, and evidently to their own intense satisfaction. This queer dance occupies two or three minutes, after which the patter of their little feet is heard no more, the buzz and the bum-m-m are hushed; they have gone to their respective places of abode, and are seen no more for that time. This usually takes place on the evening of a very hot day—a day when pitch has boiled on deck, and the thermometer below has stood persistently above ninety degrees. When the lamps are lit in the ward-room, and the officers have gathered round the table for a rubber at whist or a social glass, then is heard all about and around you a noise like the rushing of many waters, or the wind among the forest-trees; and on looking up, you find the bulkheads black, or rather brown, with the rustling wretches, while dozens go whirling past you, alight on your head, or fly right in your face, and at the same time the aroma which fills the room is too horrible to be described. This is a cockroaches' ball, which, if not so brilliant as the butterfly ball of my early recollections, I have no doubt is considered by themselves as very amusing and highly respectable.

The reader will readily admit that the character of 'greedy as gluttons' has not been misapplied when I state that it would be an easier task to tell what they did not eat, than what they *did*. While they partake largely of the common articles of diet in the ship's stores, they also rather like books, clothes, boots, soap, and corks. They are also partial to lucifer-matches, and consider the edges

of razors and amputating-knives delicate eating.* As to drink, these animals exhibit the same impartiality. Probably they *do* prefer wines and spirits, but they can nevertheless drink beer with relish, and even suit themselves to circumstances, and imbibe water, either pure or mixed with soap; and if they cannot obtain wine, they find in ink a very good substitute. Cockroaches, I should think, were by no means exempt from the numerous ills that flesh is heir to, and must at times, like human epicures and gourmands, suffer dreadfully from rheums and dyspepsia; for to what else can I attribute their extreme partiality for medicine. 'Every man his own doctor,' seems to be their motto; and they appear to attach no other meaning to the word 'surgeon' than simply something to eat: I speak by experience. As to physic, nothing seems to come wrong to them. If patients on shore were only half as fond of pills and draughts, I, for one, should never go to sea. As to powders, they invariably roll themselves bodily in them; and tinctures they sip all day long. Blistering-plaster seems a patent nostrum, which they take internally, for they managed to use up two ounces of mine in as many weeks, and I have no doubt it warmed their insides. I one night left a dozen blue pills carelessly exposed on my little table; soon after I had turned in, I observed the box surrounded by them, and being too lazy to get up, I had to submit to see my pills walked off with in a very few minutes by a dozen 'roaches, each one carrying a pill. I politely informed them that there was more than a dose for an adult cockroach in each of these pills; but I rather think they did not heed the caution, for next morning, the deck of my little cabin was strewn with the dead and dying, some exhibiting all the symptoms of an advanced stage of mercurial salivation, and some still swallowing little morsels of pill, no doubt on the principle of *similia similibus curantur*, from which I argue that cockroaches are homeopaths, although, had they adopted the other homeopathic theory first, and taken infinitesimal doses, they would then have experienced the full benefit of that noble doctrine; and the medicine, while doing them no good, would have done them just as little harm. That cockroaches are cowards, no one, I suppose, will think of disputing. I have seen a gigantic cockroach run away from an ant, under the impression, I suppose, that the little creature meant to swallow him alive.

The smaller-sized cockroach differs merely in size and some unimportant particulars from that just described, and possesses in a less degree all the vices of his big brother. They, too, are cannibals; but they prefer to prey upon the large one, which they kill and eat when they find wounded. For example, one very hot day, I was enjoying the luxury of a bath at noon, when a large cockroach alighted in great hurry on the edge of my bath, and began to drink, without saying: 'By your leave,' or 'Good-morning to you.' Now, being by nature of a kind disposition, I certainly should never have refused to allow the creature to quench his thirst in my bath—although I would undoubtedly have killed him afterwards—had he not, in his hurried flight over me, touched my shoulder

with his filthy wings, and left thereon his peculiar perfume. This very naturally incensed me, so, seizing a book, with an interjectional remark on his confounded impudence, I struck him to the deck, when he lay to all appearance dead; so, at least, thought a wily little roach of the small genus, that had been watching the whole affair at the mouth of his hole, and determined to seize his gigantic relative, and have a feast at his expense; so, with this praiseworthy intention, the imp marched boldly up to him, pausing just one second, as if to make sure that life was extinct; then, seeing no movement or sign of life evinced by the giant, he very pompously seized him by the fore-leg, and, turning round, commenced dragging his burden towards a hole, no doubt inwardly chuckling at the anticipation of so glorious a supper. Unfortunately for the dwarf's hopes, however, the giant now began to revive from the effects of concussion of the brain, into which state my rough treatment had sent him; and his ideas of his whereabouts being rather confused, at the same time feeling himself moving, he very naturally and instinctively began to help himself to follow, by means of his disengaged extremities. Being as yet unaware of what had happened behind, the heart of the little gentleman in front swelled big with conscious pride and dignity at the thought of what a strong little 'roach he was, and how easily he could drag away his big relative.

But this new and sudden access of strength began presently to astonish the little creature itself, for, aided by the giant's movements, it could now almost run with its burden, and guessing, I suppose, that everything was not as it ought to be, it peeped over its shoulder to see. Fancy, if you can, the terror and affright of the little gentleman on seeing the monster creeping stealthily after it. 'What had it been doing? How madly it had been acting!' Dropping its relative's leg, it turned, and fairly ran, helping itself along with its wings, like a barn-door fowl whose wits have been scared away by fright, and never looked once back till fairly free from its terrible adventure; and I have no doubt it was very glad at having discovered its mistake in time, since otherwise the tables might have been turned, and the supper business reversed.

The spider, however, is the great enemy of the small genus of cockroaches. These spiders are queer little fellows. They do not build a web for a fly-trap, but merely for a house. For the capture of their prey, they have a much more ingenious method than any I have ever seen, a process which displays a marvellous degree of ingenuity and cleverness on the part of the spider, and proves that they are not unacquainted with some of the laws of mechanics. Having determined to treat himself to fresh meat, the wary little thing (I forgot to say that the creature, although very small in proportion to the generality of tropical spiders, is rather bigger than our domestic spider, and much stronger) emerges from his house, in a corner of the cabin roof, and, having attached one end of a thread to a beam in the roof, about six inches from the bulkhead, he crawls more than half-way down the bulkhead, and attaching the thread here again, goes a little further down, and waits. By and by, some unwary 'roach crawls along, between the second attachment of the thread and the spider; instantly the latter rushes from his station, describes half a circle round his victim, lets go the second attachment of the thread—which has now become

* It is probable that the edges of razors, &c. are destroyed by a sort of acid deposited there by the cockroaches, similar to that which exudes from the egg; however, there is no gainsaying the fact.

entangled about the legs of the 'roach—and, by some peculiar movement, which I do not profess to understand, the cockroach is swung off the bulkhead, and hangs suspended by the feet in mid-air; and very foolish he looks; so at least must think the spider, as he coolly stands on the bulkhead quietly watching the unavailing struggles of the animal which he has so nimbly done for; for Calcraft himself could not have done the thing half so neatly. The spider now regains the beam to which the thread is attached, and, sailor-like, slides down the little rope, and approaches his victim; and first, as its kicking might interfere with the further domestic arrangements of its body, the 'roach is killed, by having a hole eaten out of its head between the eyes. This being accomplished, the next thing is to bring home the butcher-meat; and the manner in which this difficult task is performed is nothing less than wonderful. A thread is attached to the lower part of the body of the 'roach; the spider then 'shins' up its rope with this thread, and attaches it so high that the body is turned upside down; it then hauls on the other thread, turns the body once more, and again attaches the thread; and this process is repeated till the dead cockroach is by degrees hoisted up to the beam, and deposited in a corner near the door of its domicile. But the wisdom of the spider is still further shewn in what is done next. It knows very well—so, at least, it would appear—that its supply of food will soon decay; and being unacquainted with the properties of salt, it proceeds to enclose the body of the 'roach in a glutinous substance of the form of a chrysalis or air-tight case. It is, in fact, hermetically sealed, and in this way serves the spider as food for more than a week. There is at one end a little hole, which is, no doubt, closed up after every meal.

In my cabin, besides the common earwigs, which were not numerous, and were seldom seen, I found there were a goodly number of scorpions, none of which, however, were longer than two inches. I am not aware that they did me any particular damage, further than inspiring me with horror and disgust. It was very unpleasant to put down your hand for a book, and to find a scorpion beneath your fingers—a hard scaly scorpion—and then to hear him crack below your boot, and to be sensible of the horrid odour emitted from his body: these things were not pleasant. Those scorpions which live in ships are of a brown colour, and not dangerous; it is the large green scorpion, so common in the islands of East Africa, which you must be cautious in handling, for children, it is said, frequently die from the effects of this scorpion's sting. But a much more loathsome, and a really dangerous creature is the large green centipede of the tropics. Of these things, the natives themselves have more horror than of any serpent whatever, not excepting the common cobra, and many a tale they have to tell you of people who have been bitten, and have soon after gone raving mad, and so died. They are from six to twelve inches in length, and just below the neck, are armed with a powerful pair of sharp claws, like the nails of a cat, with which they hold on to their victim while they bite; and if once fairly fastened into the flesh, they require to be cut out. While lying at the mouth of the Revooma River, we had taken on board some green wood, and with it many centipedes of a similar colour. One night, about a week afterwards, I had turned in, and had nearly fallen asleep, when I observed a

thing on my curtain—luckily on the outside—which very quickly made me wide awake. It was a horrid centipede, about nine inches long. It appeared to be asleep, and had bent itself in the form of the letter S. I could see its golden-green skin by the light of my lamp, and its wee shiny eyes, that, I suppose, never close, and for the moment I was almost terror-struck. I knew if I moved he would be off, and I might get bitten again—indeed, I never could have slept again in my cabin, had he not been taken. The steward came at my call; and that functionary, by dint of caution and the aid of a pair of forceps, deposited the creature in a bottle of spirits of wine, which stood at hand always ready to receive such specimens. I have it now beside me; and my Scotch landlady, who seems firmly impressed with the idea, that all my diabolical-looking specimens of lizards and various other creeping things are the productions of sundry unhappy patients, remarked concerning my centipede: 'He maun hae had a *sair warne* ye took that ane oot o', doctor.'

But a worse adventure befell an engineer of ours. He was doing duty in the stoke-hole, when one of these loathsome creatures actually crept up under his pantaloons. He was an old sailor, and a cool, and he knew well that if he attempted to kill or knock it off, the claws would be inserted on the instant. Cautiously he rolled down his dress, and spread a handkerchief on his leg a short distance before the centipede, which was moving slowly and hesitatingly upwards. It was a moment of intense excitement, both for those around him as well as for the man himself. Slowly it advanced, once it stopped, then moved on again, and crossed on to the handkerchief, and the engineer was saved; on which he immediately got sick, and I was sent for, heard the story, and received the animal, which I placed beside the other.

More pleasant and amusing companions and cabin mates were the little ants, a whole colony of which lived in almost every available corner of my sanctum. Wonderfully wise they are too, and very strong, and very proud and 'clannish.' Their prey is the large cockroach. If you kill one of these, and place it in the centre of the cabin, parties of ants troop in from every direction—I might say a regiment from each clan; and consequently there is a great deal of fighting and squabbling, and not much is done, except that the cockroach is usually devoured on the spot. If, however, the dead 'roach be placed near some corner where an army of ants are encamped, they soon emerge from the camp in hundreds, down they march in a stream, and proceed forthwith to carry it away. Slowly up the bulkhead moves the huge brute, impelled by the united force of half a thousand, and soon he is conveyed to the top. Here, generally, there is a beam to be crossed, where the whole weight of the giant 'roach has to be sustained by these Liliputians, with their heads downward; and more difficult still is the rounding of the corner. Very often, the ants here make a most egregious mistake; while hundreds are hauling away at each leg, probably a large number get on top of the 'roach, and begin tugging away with all their might, and consequently their burden tumbles to the deck; but the second time he is taken up, this mistake is never made. These creatures send out regular spies, which return to report when they have found anything worth taking to head-quarters; then the foraging-party goes out, and it is quite

a sight to see the long serpentine line, three or four deep, streaming down the bulkhead and over the deck, and apparently having no end. They never march straight before them; their course is always wavy; and it is all the more strange that those coming up behind should take exactly the same course, so that the real shape of the line of march never changes. Perhaps this is effected by the officer-ants, which you may see, one here, one there, all along the line. By the officer-ants I mean a large-sized ant (nearly double), that walks along by the side of the marching army, like ants in authority. They are black (the common ant being brown), and very important, too, they look, and are no doubt deeply impressed by the responsibility of their situation and duties, running hither and thither—first back, then to the side, and sometimes stopping for an instant with another officer, as if to give or receive orders, and then hurrying away again. These are the ants, I have no doubt, that are in command, and also act as engineers and scouts, for you can always see one or two of them running about, just before the main body comes on—probably placing signal-staffs, and otherwise determining the line of march. They seem very energetic officers too, and allow no obstacle to come in their way, for I have often known the line of march to lie up one side of my white pants, over my knees, and down the other. I sat thus once till a whole army passed over me—a very large army it was too, and mightily tried my patience. When the rear-guard had passed over, I got up and walked away, which must have considerably damaged the calculations of the engineers on their march back.

Of the many species of flies found in my cabin, I shall merely mention two—namely, the silly fly—which is about the size of a pin-head, and furnished with two high wings like the sails of a Chinese junk: they come on board with the bananas, and merit the appellation of *silly* from the curious habit they have of running about with their noses down, as if earnestly looking for something which they cannot find: they run a little way, stop, change their direction, and run a little further, stop again, and so on, *ad infinitum*, in a manner quite amusing to any one who has time to look at and observe them—and the hammer-legged fly (the *Fænus* of naturalists), which possesses two long hammer-like legs, that stick out behind, and have a very curious appearance. This fly has been accused of biting, but I have never found him guilty. He seems to be continually suffering from a chronic stage of shaking-palsy. Wherever he alights—which is as often on your nose as anywhere else—he stands for a few seconds shaking in a manner which is quite distressing to behold, then flies away, with his two hammers behind him, to alight and shake on some other place—most likely your neighbour's nose. It seems to me, indeed, that flies have a penchant for one's nose. Nothing, too, is more annoying than those same house-flies in warm countries. Suppose one alights on the extreme end of your nasal apparatus, you of course drive him off; he describes two circles in the air, and alights again on the same spot; and this you may do fifty times, and at the fifty-first time, back he comes with a saucy hum-m, and takes his seat again, just as if your nose was made for him to go to roost upon, and for no other purpose at all; so that you are either obliged to sit and snuffle complacently with a fly on the

end of your proboscis, or, if you are clever and supple-jointed, follow him all round the room till you have killed him; then, probably, back you come with a face beaming with gratification, and sit down to your book or your beer, when bum-m-m! there is your friend again, and you have killed the wrong fly.

In an hospital, nothing is more annoying than these flies; sleep by day is sometimes entirely out of the question, unless the patient covers his face, which is by no means agreeable on a hot day. Mosquitoes, too, are troublesome customers to a stranger, for they seem to prefer the blood of a stranger to that of any one else. The mosquito is a beautiful, feathery-horned midge, with long airy legs, and a body and wings that tremble with their very fineness and grace. The head and shoulders are bent downward at almost a right angle, as if the creature had fallen on its head and broken its back; but, for all its beauty, the mosquito is a hypocritical little scoundrel, who comes singing round you, apparently so much at his ease, and looking so innocent and gentle, that one would imagine butter would hardly melt in his cursed little mouth. He alights upon your skin with such a light and fairy tread, inserts his tube, and sucks your blood so cleverly, that the mischief is done long before you are aware, and he is off again singing as merrily as ever. Probably, if you look about the curtain, you may presently find him gorged with your blood, and hardly able to fly—an unhappy little midge now, very sick, and with all his pride fallen; so you catch and kill him; and serve him right, too.

I should deem this little sketch incomplete if I omitted to say a word about another little member of the company in my crowded cabin—a real friend, too, and a decided enemy to all the rest of the creeping genera about him. I refer to a chameleon I caught in the woods, and tamed. His principal food consisted in cockroaches, which he caught very cleverly, and which, before eating, he used to beat against the deck to soften. He lived in a little stone-jar, which made a very cool house for him, and to which he periodically retired to rest; and very indignant he was, too, if any impudent cockroach, in passing, raised itself on its fore-legs to look in. Instant pursuit was the consequence, and his colour came and went in a dozen different hues as he seized and beat to death the intruder on his privacy. He seemed to know me, and crawled about me. My buttons were his chief attraction; he appeared to think they were made for him to hang on to by the tail; and he would stand for five minutes at a time on my shoulder, darting his tongue in every direction at the unwary flies which came within his reach; and, upon the whole, I found him a very useful little animal, indeed. These lizards are very common as pets among the sailors on the coast of Africa, who keep them in queer places sometimes, as the following conversation, which I heard between two sailors at Cape Town, will shew.

'Look here, Jack, what I've got in my 'baccabox.'

'What is it?' said Jack—'a devil?'

'No,' said the other as unconcernedly as if it might have been a devil, but wasn't—'no! a chameleon;' which he pronounced kammylion.

'Queer lion that 'ere, too,' replied Jack.

But, indeed, there are few creatures which a sailor will not attempt to tame. Among the

favourites are the monkey, the mongoose, the lizard, and Johanna-cat; I have heard of young crocodiles; and I myself once possessed a fine young hyæna, and a large species of monitor lizard. The first I found rather inconvenient aboard ship, and I was obliged to part with the latter from his vicious propensities.

THE PHENOMENA OF METEORS.

EVERY one who had faith sufficient to believe in the predictions put forth concerning the expected great shower of meteors to appear on the night between the 13th and 14th of November last, will have had no cause to regret placing trust in the philosophers, for the reward was a spectacle such as few of the present generation can have had an opportunity of witnessing. The night in question, in the neighbourhood of London, was, with little exception, brilliantly clear, and the meteoric display was exceedingly well seen.

Meteoric bodies are variously known as aërolites, fire-balls, meteorites, and shooting or falling stars. Their existence has been known from very ancient times, but beyond the fact of their existence, all was conjectural. On many occasions, their appearance served only to terrify. To take one instance. On a certain night in October, in the year 1366, a Portuguese historian says: 'There was in the heavens a movement of stars, such as men never before saw or heard of. At midnight, and for some time after, all the stars moved from the east to the west . . . and afterwards they fell from the sky in such numbers, and so thickly together, that as they descended low in the air, they seemed large and fiery, and the sky and the air seemed to be in flames, and even the earth appeared as if ready to take fire. Those who saw it were filled with great fear and dismay, imagining that the end of the world had come. Whether these bodies were formed in the atmosphere, or whether they came from beyond, was unknown. In our times, however, they have been shewn to be distinct cosmical bodies, governed, in fact, by laws similar to those that keep in their places the more ponderous bodies of the solar system.

Now, there are certain periods at which very large numbers of those bodies are seen, and it began to be remarked in some of these displays, that, if the apparent paths of the meteors were continued backwards, the greater part of them would meet in one particular point of the sky, or rather in one particular region of small extent; also, that when a meteoric display lasted for any considerable time, this place of departure of the meteors, or 'radiant point' and 'radiant region,' as it has since been called, did not change its place amongst the fixed stars, that is, was not affected by the motion of the earth. These facts were remarked in the great display seen in America by Dr Olmsted on the night of November 12, 1833, and afterwards by Quetelet of Brussels, and Herrick in America, in the case of other meteoric showers; and they have since been amply confirmed. Again, although a few meteors may be seen on almost any clear night, a tendency to periodical return began to be noticed. Thus, there were unusual displays of meteors about November 13, in the years 1799, 1822, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1837, 1838, and in other years not quoted; the number of meteors seen in some of these years being very great; in others, less.

On August 10, as well as at some other dates, meteors were also observed to be more numerous than usual; and generally this fact came out: that there were certain periods of the year at which meteors are seen in every year in unusual numbers; whilst at certain other periods, they are seen only in particular years, or in years separated by long intervals. The meteoric shower of November 13 was of the latter character.

Professor Newton of America, who has investigated the phenomena of the November meteors, found, by comparing together thirteen historic star-showers, occurring between the years 902 and 1833, that a common shower existed on November 13, which returned with especial intensity about every thirty-three years. We have thus two types. In one case, meteors are seen every year; in the other case, in certain years only. How are these phenomena to be explained? By supposing that there are independent zones or rings of meteors circulating round the sun, but inclined to the earth's path, through which zones the earth in its annual course successively passes. This, it will be remarked, is in harmony with what has been advanced with respect to radiant regions and fixity of radiant regions. But although this explains the return of meteors every year, it does not explain the thirty-three years' period of the November shower. A simple modification, however, will suffice; for imagine that, instead of the meteors being uniformly distributed throughout the ring, they are gathered together more towards particular parts of the ring; and suppose that the time of revolution of the ring differs from that of the earth, then in some year the earth will pass through that part of the ring containing many meteors; in the next year, it will pass through a part in which there are fewer, and may continue to pass through a thin part of the ring, until the difference between the times of revolution of the earth and ring, amounting to a whole revolution, will bring the earth and thick part of the ring again together, and the display of some years previous will be again repeated. Now, this supposed case is the fact, as Professor Newton has found from investigation of the phenomena of the November meteors; and he having ascertained the precise period between the successive returns of maximum intensity of the November display, was enabled with confidence to predict for the morning of the 14th of November 1866, and accurately within a few hours, the return of a period of maximum intensity. The position of the 'radiant region' of the November shower being near the star Gamma of the constellation Leo, the direction in which these meteors meet the earth is inclined at an angle of seventeen degrees to the ecliptic; and their motion is, astronomically speaking, retrograde—that is, opposite to that of the planets.

The general laws concerning the great meteoric showers having been well established, philosophers began to inquire whether the 'sporadic' meteors could not be shewn to be governed by similar laws. By sporadic meteors is meant those solitary meteors which may be seen, sometimes one or two, sometimes perhaps only one, on any clear night, as well as those few seen sometimes at the time of some great display, which do not harmonise with the dominant shower. Two investigations of this kind have been made, one by Professor Heis of Münster, the other by Mr Greg of Manchester. Both these gentlemen, by making use of a large

number of observations of paths of sporadic meteors, have independently arrived at results strongly corroborative, shewing the existence of above fifty radiant regions. Meteors from some of the zones corresponding to these radiant regions meet the earth for many days in succession, and meteors from several different radiant regions may be seen on the same night; the different sets thus interlacing in space. The labours of Professor Heis and Mr Greg in thus reducing to law what was apparent confusion, have greatly advanced the subject.

So much as respects the mere motions of the meteors. But they are luminous. How is this? And what produces the brilliant train? Here we enter on some uncertainty. The experiments of Mr Joule make it probable that incandescence is the effect of caloric produced by friction with the air of the atmosphere. A small projectile entering the earth's atmosphere with a velocity comparable to that of planets, will be checked, and there will come a certain point at which the resistance will be greatest; and on the supposition above, there will here be the greatest light. Sublimation or abstraction of luminous particles may also produce the train. As the meteor moves on, these effects diminish, and the meteor may pass into obscurity. It is remarked that the central portion of the train is that which remains longest visible; very often the train of a meteor can be seen for some seconds, and occasionally for some minutes, and in such cases the train usually assumes more or less of a curved form before disappearance.

As concerns the heights and velocities of meteors, we will give the results of some measures. It will be understood that if the path of any meteor amongst the fixed stars be remarked as seen at two distinct places, the amount of difference of apparent position will depend on its proximity; and if the duration of the meteor be observed also, the heights of the meteor at appearance and disappearance may be calculated, and also its velocity. Professor Newton has collected and calculated 300 such cases, and finds for average height at appearance, 73½ miles; at disappearance, 50½ miles. A similar inquiry made for the British Association gave for averages 70 miles and 54 miles. Mr A. S. Herschel calculated the heights of a number of meteors observed on August 9 and 10, 1863, and the average height at appearance is 82 miles, and at disappearance 58 miles. He finds the average velocity to be 34 miles per second. And from some meteors observed on November 12, 1865, he finds the averages of appearance and disappearance to be 61 and 47 miles respectively, and the average velocity 64 miles per second.

A word or two as to colours of meteors. These appear to differ—at least the observations differ. Thus (Humboldt's *Cosmos*, chapter on Shooting-stars), of 4000 observations collected during nine years, two-thirds were white, one-seventh yellow, one-seventeenth yellowish red, and one thirty-seventh green. Now, of 271 meteors observed at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, on the night of November 12, 1865, 197 were blue, 34 white, 30 bluish white, the remaining 10 being, some yellow, some red, and some green.

It now only remains to give some account of the late display of meteors on November 13, 1866. Professor Newton's prediction having aroused the attention of astronomers, great preparations were made for observing them. Of the results obtained,

we can say little here; time is necessary for a discussion of the observations; we can only give some general remarks. The display was perhaps not quite so fine as expected, but still sufficiently so to any one who saw such a sight for the first time. About nine in the evening, a few solitary meteors began to be observed; between eleven and midnight, they became more numerous, appearing in the east, and passing off by the north and south as expected, the radiant region (in the constellation Leo) being as yet scarcely above the horizon. The absence of the moon allowed the display to be seen in all its magnificence; and as the constellation Leo ascended above the horizon, it became evident that the radiant region of the November shower was still the same (near to the star Gamma Leonis). The meteors continued to come between midnight and 2 A.M. thicker and faster, and could be counted by hundreds. Many were seen at the same time. First one would start towards Ursa Major, followed instantly by another, emulous of the first; then one would rush off southwards across Orion; then one would sail majestically over the zenith; others would ascend vertically from Leo for a short distance, others would shoot directly downwards. The trains left by some of the meteors were beautiful to behold—some green, some yellow, some red, but more of a bluish cast. In some cases, the trains were visible for several minutes. Great numbers of the meteors near Leo were short, probably from foreshortening of their real path; this foreshortening caused the apparent paths to assume in some cases curious forms. Nothing like explosions were heard; indeed, the stillness accompanying the activity overhead forced itself on one's notice. After 2 A.M., the number of meteors rapidly declined, though they continued to be seen throughout the night. Above eight thousand are said to have been counted at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich—far exceeding any previous record at that place, and approaching, though by no means equalling, the American display of 1833.

That such evanescent and apparently erratic bodies as meteors should yield to any investigation, seems surprising. But persevering study of their complex appearances, a true spirit of induction applied to collected facts, has done the work; and now order is seen to reign in that which was comparative disorder; shewing that nature everywhere works on one uniform plan.

DR MUSPRATT'S PATIENTS.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER V.

ONE morning, a hackney-coach stopped before Mr Muspratt's door in Great Newport Street; from this coach the doctor himself alighted, and then, aided by certain of his pupils and subordinates, carried into his house *something* that had been riding with him. The *something* was long and heavy, apparently. There was some staggering about under its weight; and it was muffled in a horseman's cloak. No looker-on could pronounce for certain as to the nature of the *something*; yet concerning it, all things considered, a shrewd guess might have been formed.

Presently, there was great activity in an inner room in the doctor's house—activity of a mysterious kind; yet medicinal and analgetic certainly. There was much curious whispering and muttering

among Mr Muspratt's assistants; the words 'Very fine subject' might have been heard, frequently repeated. Then came excited talk—low-voiced yet enthusiastic—the burden of which was the phrase constantly recurring, 'Most extraordinary case!' Finally, there was sung, *sotto voce*, a sort of hymn of praise and celebration, which had the marvellous ability and skill of Mr Muspratt for its chief theme.

The doctor himself was by no means unstirred; he even trembled now and then in the excess of his interest, in the fever of his expectation; yet he was full of thought, and resource, and watchfulness: there was no chance of his losing his presence of mind. He had taken off his coat, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, to secure freedom enough of action. He had pushed far back his wig, for the better cooling of his globose forehead, from which the perspiration was trickling freely. To have seen the great Mr Muspratt to perfection, he should have been seen then. You would never more have deemed him shabby-looking or small-sized. As his eyes were dilated and lit up, so his form seemed to be enlarged by the grandeur of the intelligence within him, now to be beheld at its very best advantage. Between his ordinary and his present aspect, there was just the difference between a fountain unemployed and the same thing in full play. It needed the genius of a Reynolds to have fittingly rendered the doctor upon canvas, and to have conveyed to an interested posterity some notion of his appearance taken at its happiest moment. Unfortunately, no such recording portraiture exists. Indeed, at the time of which I am writing, Mr (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds was too young and undistinguished a man to have been intrusted with so important a subject.

The doctor at last resumed his coat, and sat down before his writing-table for a few moments' rest and reflection. He had succeeded, and yet was somewhat disconcerted too, for in some way his success had disturbed his calculations. This had been purchased by the sacrifice of a Theory. His nervous fingers beat a tattoo upon the table; he nodded his head with an air of half-vexed meditation as he murmured: 'The man ought not to have recovered. If ever there was a likely subject for apoplexia, he was one. He must weigh some sixteen stone. He must be clearly twice the weight of Cassidy. Of a full habit too. Corpulent even—with a short neck. True, the muscular development is wonderful, wonderful, and the vital power amazing. But the chances were all against him. No, he ought not to have recovered; clearly he ought not.'

The smart rap of a cane was heard upon the oaken door. Mr Selwyn entered, bowing and smiling, with an eager look of curiosity in his face.

'Hush!' said Mr Muspratt with his finger upon his lip.

'Hush! by all means,' said Mr Selwyn, and he imitated the doctor's gesture.

'I can tell you nothing as yet for certain,' whispered the doctor. But the visitor could not mistake the tone of elation.

'My dear Mr Muspratt, you mean that you have succeeded again!'

'Hush! you shall judge for yourself presently, presently.'

'Which one is it? The big one?'

'The big one. I know no more of him.'

'It is Blackmore the highwayman,' said Mr Selwyn. 'The town has been premature in its rejoicings. Let Finchley and Bagshot still beware. Better for them if we had spared a better man.'

After some delay, Mr Selwyn was admitted by Mr Muspratt into an inner room, upon the express condition that he should remain there five minutes only, and be very quiet the while.

A tall, burly, swarthy, black-browed man lay stretched upon a couch, breathing heavily. He was only half-clothed, and his neck was carefully bandaged. One of Mr Muspratt's assistants was bathing the man's forehead with vinegar; another was applying hot flannels to the soles of his feet. As Mr Selwyn entered, the man stirred a little, then opened his eyes, and glanced round him in a dazed, wild way.

'I'm game, you know,' he said in a hoarse mutter, after a pause. 'It's the heat of the room made me faint, that's all. Tom Blackmore's no chicken-heart. But they let such crowds in to see me; I counted three thousand of them on Sunday last—all quality, too, from the west end of the town. They weren't in such a hurry to stand face to face with Tom Blackmore a fortnight ago. I'm ready when the cart is. They'll find me game to the end. I should like my hair dressed, Mr Sheriff, and my boots blacked. I've no other favour to ask. If you *are* the sheriff'—and he glanced doubtfully at Mr Muspratt.

The doctor took the man's wrist between his finger and thumb. 'An amazing strong beat—amazing!' he said.

'I've had a bad dream,' the man went on hazily. 'I think a sip of strong-waters would set me up. I thought it was all over with me. I thought I had the hempen fever, and there was an end of poor Tom Blackmore. They *have* tied something round my neck, haven't they? This is Newgate, isn't it? Of course it is: there's Mr Selwyn there.—My service to you, sir. Come to see the last of me, I suppose. I'm not quite myself this morning, sir; but they'll find me game yet. I'm ready when the cart is. My hair dressed, and my boots blacked, and a sip of strong-waters—make it a rummer of punch, if you like—I won't ask anything more, Mr Sheriff. But you're *not* the sheriff!'

'I am not the sheriff; and you are not in Newgate,' said Mr Muspratt.

'A reprieve!' said the man. 'No; not in my case. They couldn't do such a thing; they dared not; the town would not allow it. To do Tom Blackmore justice, they couldn't reprieve him; it would be a slur upon his character. He's too well known; he's been on the "high pad" too long and too royally. There's no reprieve for me.—Still, this isn't Newgate. Where are the bars, the chains, the bolts?'

'You've been spared by an accident,' Mr Muspratt explained.

'By the rare skill of a most distinguished surgeon,' Mr Selwyn added.

'It wasn't a dream, then?' inquired the man with a puzzled look. The story of his escape was repeated to him; but, apparently, he could make nothing of it. His mental digestion was not sufficiently restored; his shaken intelligence could not deal with such strong food as the fact of his recovery from death. He glanced round him, shook his head, then closed his eyes, and turned upon his side, as though going to sleep.

The doctor touched Mr Selwyn on the arm, motioning him to depart.

'I'm bound to say,' Mr Selwyn remarked, 'that next to the pleasure of seeing the man Blackmore as I saw him, and left him, this morning, I count the pleasure of seeing him alive and well again, as at the present moment.'

The sound of talking roused the man Blackmore; he opened his eyes. 'Mr Selwyn,' he said, 'buy that bay mare of mine. You'll never regret it. She'll be sold for the benefit of my captors, and will go for a mere song—for she's not good-looking—but she's the fastest nag that ever was crossed. Only, hark ye, let me give you a hint—she's one fault: you'll have to use the spur *when you want to get her up to a carriage-window*. Now, I'm ready when the sheriff is. How many cartfuls are there of us this morning?'

Mr Blackmore had reverted to his first idea, that his punishment had yet to be undergone.

'I'm vastly obliged,' said Mr Selwyn. 'I've no doubt the mare is a very admirable animal. And who knows? I may be driven to taking purses upon the king's highway. My luck has been frightful of late. My friends rob me; why should I not rob those who are not my friends?—gain at Blackheath what I lose on the green baize. I've not a doubt that "Stand and deliver" is the real "open sesame."'

'You've a pleasant wit, Mr Selwyn,' said the highwayman musingly. 'It saved your life once, or at least your purse.'

'Indeed; then my wit never stood me in better stead.'

'I rode after you from Strawberry Hill one night—I followed for two miles before I recognised you. Then I said: Shall I attack him? Gadsbad, says I, it's Mr Selwyn. No; I'll let him go. I've laughed at many a joke of his; for there's never a match of cocks fought, or a bull baited, or a race ridden at Huntingdon or Newmarket—hardly a cork drawn or a pack of cards cut, but Mr Selwyn's last is told and laughed at. So I put my barking-irons [pistols] in my belt again. I respect a man of parts. Indeed, I've been reckoned by my friends to have a pleasant wit myself.'

'Your friends only do you strict justice, I'm sure, Captain Blackmore,' said Mr Selwyn, with great gravity. 'Though I doubt many people—cavillers and critics—hold your jests to be somewhat of too practical a turn for general enjoyment. To be glancing up the muzzle of a horse-pistol, held at only two inches' space from one's countenance, strikes me, I own, as somewhat of a hollow jest.'

'Come, come,' interrupted Mr Muspratt, 'we must leave the man; he has talked enough—more than enough.' And he was drawing Mr Selwyn to the door.

'And sure, it's the captain,' said an astonished voice. Mr Cassidy had entered the room.

'Why, Thady, lad, is that you?' asked the captain, with an air of recognition.

'Who else would it be, captain, darlin'?'

'Why, I thought you were'—The captain did not finish the sentence.

'So I was, captain, darlin'; and no mistake at all.'

'You left Newgate days ago.'

'I did—for good.'

'For Tyburn, you mean. And you're alive? Gadsbad, it looks like it.'

'We're in the same boat, I'm thinkin'. Did it

hurt you much, captain, darlin'? Have you got the pins and needles about you, all over? I know the complaint. But you'll be rid of them in time.'

'Am I awake—alive?—Have you got a pinch of tobacco, Thady? I should be better after a pipe. If there was any punch about, I think I could get some down. My throat's uncommon dry. I'll try and get to sleep. Mind and have my boots well blacked, and bring me my hot water in the morning. If you could give the mare a feed of corn, it would be as well.—Do you know a song, Thady? Sing it, if you do. I shall sleep the sooner. The poor mare! she'll miss me—if no one else will. But others will; trust them for it. Tom Blackmore's well known upon the road.—Good-night, Thady, lad; and if we must ride up Holborn Hill'—

'Hush! come away; the man's asleep.' And the doctor withdrew, Mr Selwyn and Thady following him.

CHAPTER VI.

'The country is badly served,' quoth Mr Selwyn, very seriously. 'I did think that, at anyrate, Mr Ketch was beyond suspicion: a competent minister. As to his moral character, I own I have not been favourably impressed; but I thought his skill unquestionable. I have been deceived, it seems—we can trust no one, not even Mr Ketch; we can be sure of nothing—not even of Tyburn tree. What is there serious in life, when even an execution degenerates into a farce? Do you intend to proceed with your labours, most Promethean doctor? Is medicine still to undermine and mock at law? Is Barber-surgeon's Hall to go on reversing the decisions of the Old Bailey? What a puppet is man in the hands of the professions! The one ties him up and hangs him; the other cuts him down and revives him. And the church? Oh, the church stands by the while; but its eyes are fixed devoutly on its book; it sees nothing of what's going on. That is the church's way of looking at things—looking elsewhere.'

The doctor, to whom this banter was addressed, said nothing; he was lost in thought.

'However,' Mr Selwyn continued, 'there's one comfort—we have a check upon Mr Cassidy now. Travellers tell us such wonderful tales; and the traveller who has journeyed a stage into the other world, what marvels he may relate to us; and we should be bound to believe him—are we not always bound to believe what we can't contradict? But our captain has his story to tell also; and if the two men's stories don't agree, we shall be justified in believing neither of them. Perhaps, in any case, that would be the most advisable course. A sheep-stealer and a highwayman—they are not the most credible of witnesses. Hang me, if they are—I mean, of course, hang me, provided you are by, my dear Mr Muspratt, to revive me again.'

But Mr Muspratt was not attending. His visitor smiled, took snuff, shrugged his shoulders, tripped to his sedan-chair, and was carried to White's Chocolate-house.

In the course of a few days, Mr Selwyn called again in Great Newport Street. He found Mr Muspratt brooding over a curious, neatly made little model in cardboard. It represented a raised stage with a trap-door in the centre of it; close to the trap-door were two upright wooden posts—pieces of firewood, they looked like—joined at the

top by a horizontal bar. Mr Selwyn's curiosity was excited by the strange look of the model. He made inquiries concerning it.

'If I can arrive at no positive theory in regard to resuscitation considered as a science,' said Mr Muspratt slowly, with something of the formality of a lecturer in his manner, 'why—with apparently all advantages granted—it fails so signally in some cases, while it succeeds so strangely in others, in spite of what seem to be fatal drawbacks; it is clear, on the other hand, I can easily render the present system of carrying out the law far more secure—can so improve the existing method of punishment as to render it almost certain. The great desideratum I find to be suddenness. At present, there is a want of a sufficient shock. The cart glides away gradually from beneath the feet of the sufferer. That, as we know, may or may not have a fatal consequence. You will observe the system shewn by this model. A bolt is drawn; *instantly* this trap falls. There is no sliding motion. A sudden drop—then a more violent shock results, I think, than any human organisation could resist. And the operation' (Mr Muspratt hesitated a little about the word) 'would be performed as mercifully, as painlessly, as effectually as possible.'

While speaking, the doctor had made his meaning the clearer by reference to the model before him.

'A most ingenious contrivance!' said Mr Selwyn admiringly. 'Ah! the culprits will have small chance if law and medicine join forces against them. Each acting alone is powerful to do mischief; but, together, who can withstand them? They will be absolutely irresistible.—But, dear me, is there not a most pernicious smell of tobacco-smoke?'

It was hardly worth while asking the question; the room, indeed, was full of smoke. The doctor made no answer, but rocked himself to and fro in evident unquiet and displeasure. Then from the chamber adjoining came the sound of a boisterous tenor voice singing:

Let me not love in vain—
In vain my Chloe sue;
She ne'er will find
A lad so kind,
So bonnie, blithe, and true!
With a tra, la, la, &c.

Mr Selwyn knew the voice at once. The singer was Captain Blackmore, it was evident. Many old-fashioned falsetto trills and flourishes garnished the song. An Irish howl of applause followed its completion—much uproarious approval—in which the tones of Mr Cassidy might have been recognised.

'Our captain is quite a skilled musician,' said Mr Selwyn quietly. 'I do believe he could set "Stand and deliver" to music, rob in *recitativo*, commit a burglary to a ballad-air, or cut purses to the tune of *Lillibulero*.'

Presently the highwayman was to be heard lustily trolling forth one of Macheath's songs from Gay's opera:

The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,
The judges all ranged—a terrible show, &c.;

sung to the well-known tune of *Bonnie Dundee*; the Irishman joining in a wild chorus that was rather hearty in intention than harmonious in effect; and after this, the singers proceeded to a

most vehement and intemperate performance of various Jacobite songs.

'Rank treason, as I live,' observed Mr Selwyn. 'If the constables were to overhear, or your neighbours turn informers, my dear Mr Muspratt, we should both be taken to prison for plotting against the state. I may not have a character to lose, but I have a head. It is said of me that I am fond of witnessing executions; but that must not be used as an argument for conducting me to the scaffold, for you know it is a maxim of the law that a man cannot be a witness in his own case. I should not even have the pleasure of becoming your patient, for you would probably suffer with me. And then the headman, I fancy, operates far more effectually than Mr Ketch could do, even aided by the ingenious invention on the table. After him, one is without hope as without head.'

The noise in the adjoining room now increased. The doctor groaned aloud. 'It is the same thing, day after day,' he said despairingly: 'they smoke, and drink, and sing, and then they fight.'

Cries of murder were anon to be heard, and the sound of blows, the crashing of glass, and the falling of furniture. A desperate struggle was going on, in the inner chamber apparently.

The doctor unlocked a door; Mr Selwyn grasped his cane: they entered the next room.

It was difficult to distinguish anything at first for the dense clouds of tobacco-smoke. But presently, upon the floor of the room, was to be discerned the writhing figure of Mr Cassidy, and kneeling upon him the stalwart form of Captain Blackmore. The highwayman held in his hand a jackboot, with which unusual weapon it was manifest he had been labouring the head of the unhappy Irishman. It was with some difficulty the men were torn asunder. They were both intoxicated, breathless, bruised, and bleeding; their clothes dishevelled and rent.

'Another moment, and it would have been too late, or rather'—and Mr Selwyn corrected himself—'there would have been murder.'

'Sure, it's murdered I am entirely,' moaned the Irishman, with his hands to his face.

'I'll teach the scoundrel to insult a gentleman,' growled Captain Blackmore, and he set to work to rub his shins. 'Plague on him, he kicks like a horse! I do believe I'm lamed for life in my left leg.'

'And it's my right eye that's shut up for ever; and O my ribs—and O my back! Devil take the vagabone's hard fist!' cried Mr Cassidy. 'And it's beating my head with his boot he's been after! To think of serving so a poor Connaught boy, that niver did harm to living creature!'

'You ungrateful scoundrels!' began the doctor in a passion, but he couldn't find language strong enough to express his indignation at the behaviour of his patients.

Meanwhile, the two men, having recovered breath a little, were growling and scowling at each other, as though they contemplated a renewal of the contest at the earliest possible opportunity.

'What's to be done with them?' asked Mr Muspratt, turning with a look of despair to Mr Selwyn.

'It's hard to say,' quoth Mr Selwyn.

'It was bad enough with the Irishman on my hands, but now I've got the other one too.'

'It seems to me, Mr Muspratt, that in that fact consists your chief hope of comfort,' said Mr Selwyn—'your only prospect of relief. You would

never be able to rid yourself of Mr Cassidy, or have a chance of effecting that desirable object, but by some such means as the introduction upon the scene of Captain Blackmore. It is clear the dogs can't exist together. Well, lock them up in the same room. You'll be quit of one of your troubles, at all events—possibly of both. They have already succeeded in injuring each other very tolerably; permit them to go on as they have begun. Lock them up again; wait and hope; and look in upon them, or upon what may remain of them, to-morrow morning, and see how kindly fate may have dealt with you.

The doctor pondered, stroking his chin. Ah, how near he was, aided by Mr Selwyn's sportive suggestion, to the discovery of a signal medical principle! Another moment, perhaps, and from the depths of his cogitations he might have brought to the surface and given to the world that remarkable curative doctrine which, some years later, was to render the name of Samuel Hahnemann famous. The ejection from his premises of the sheep-stealer, by means of the admission of the highwayman—what was that but the adoption of the homœopathic maxim of *Similia similibus curantur*? But like the man who had been talking prose all his life without being conscious of the fact, so Mr Muspratt was doomed to practise homœopathy without knowing it. Possibly, he was on the verge of the discovery when his musings were disturbed. Some of his pupils and assistants entered the room. He roused himself.

'Take these men,' he cried, 'and lock them up in different rooms. Tie them hand and foot, if need be.'

'You'll find I haven't done with ye yet, Pat, my boy,' said the captain with an oath, shaking his fist.

'And you'll find that Thady will give you as good as you bring, anyhow,' growled the Irishman.

And they suffered themselves to be led away, making no resistance indeed, nor giving trouble beyond evincing some desire to approach each other for kicking and cuffing purposes.

'I think I understand the model you were kind enough to shew me, even better now,' said Mr Selwyn to the doctor. 'Science is quite satisfied with her inquiries as to resuscitation, and wishes to shut the door against any further fruitless investigations in that direction. Is it not so?'

The doctor shook his head with a distressed look, as of one who despaired utterly of being properly understood.

'When you were a lad, did you ever rob an orchard, doctor?' asked Mr Selwyn presently.

'I don't know; I can't say; I don't remember.'

'Ah! then you never did, or you'd surely have remembered it. The apples one steals are invariably unripe, and they disagree with one abominably. Moral—Don't rob orchards. Now, Tyburn is the orchard of the government. It's a great mistake to steal the fruit from Tyburn tree. You've tried it, and it's set your teeth on edge, and disturbed your digestive organs terribly. I can see it has. My dear doctor, don't do it again; the fruit is bad and worthless, and, take my word for it, the very worst kind for *preserving*. Leave it on the tree henceforward. You remember what trouble Mother Eve brought upon us? Well, Tyburn tree is in its way a sort of tree of knowledge. Look on, as I do, but don't touch any more.—Good-day to you.'

CHAPTER VII.

Dr Muspratt's patients were confined in separate apartments. The large empty house in Great Newport Street afforded abundant accommodation for thus disposing of the delinquents.

Captain Blackmore bore his captivity with a sort of intoxicated resignation. He was to be heard singing lustily at intervals, his music being generally of a sentimental character, occasionally dashed with treason, and constantly impaired by hiccups and boozy difficulties in the way of his articulation. There were inequalities, too, about the method of his carolling; now he cooed like a dove, anon he was roaring like a lion. But the burden of his song was mostly of a tender and loving sort, as thus:

No pain or pleasure sure can prove
So bitter or so sweet as love.
Since the piercing pain I know,
Let me taste the pleasure too!

And so on, *da capo*, with many prolonged notes and tremulous trills.

By and by, an angry mood would seize him; and he would indulge in much heavy stamping on the floor, ferocious swearing, and in fell threats as to the punishment he would inflict at some future period upon the body of his late associate and fellow-sufferer, Thady Cassidy. In other respects, the captain did not trouble greatly the household of his benefactor.

For some time, the Irishman was to be heard crooning over his hurts and bruises, and lamenting over his sorrows, growling like some snared and baffled animal, muttering a variety of menaces and maledictions in relation to his oppressor and enemy—as he chose to consider him—Captain Blackmore. Then came silence for many hours. He was asleep; so, at least, his jailers, the doctor's pupils, opined. After some while, they deemed it prudent to have a look at him, and cautiously unlocked and opened the door of his room. To their amazement, they found it empty. The caged bird had flown. Mr Cassidy had escaped by means of the window. It was evident that, with the nimbleness of a cat, he had climbed down a rain-water pipe, then dropped into the area at the back of the house, and so apparently made good his escape over adjoining premises into a small street in the rear. What was to be done?

'Let him go,' said the doctor. 'He must take his chance now; I wash my hands of him. Perhaps it's best as it is.' And he breathed more freely. He thought the chances in favour of his museum were bettered by the absence of its recent devastator.

But shortly there came a loud, simple thump at the front-door. Mr Cassidy had returned.

'You, sirrah! How dare you!' cried the doctor in amazement.

'Sure it's Thady Cassidy, doctor, darlin', your honour's humble servant,' said the Irishman, bowing and grinning.

'Where have you been, sir?'

'And haven't I been doing your honour the real service, then? Sure it's rid you'll be now of that big blackguard, the captain; and it's quits we'll both be with him, anyhow.'

'Dolt! what have you done?'

'Am I his servant? Am I to wait on him, and run his errands? Am I to be for ever blacking

his nasty boots, and powdering his ugly head, and brushing his clothes, and polishing his buttons, and filling his glass? Not I. I did it in Newgate—true for you—but I'm not in Newgate now. And what did I get for it then, but cuffs and kicks, and a broken pate; and it's a hard fist the captain has, devil doubt him! I'm not his servant, and I won't be. Would I be serving a dirty vagabone like that? Not I. It's your honour's servant I am for evermore; your honour's humble servant, that will never leave ye—Thady Cassidy, an honest Connaught boy, that never did harm to living creature, whom your honour brought to life after he was dead; and is it likely your honour's goodness would be turning the cold shoulder on him now, and for the likes of such a thief of the world as the captain? Sure your honour never would. And your honour won't be troubled wid him any more; it's quits wid him now we'll be.'

'What have you done, I say?'

'Sure I've blown the gab on him; that's what I've done, then; and the constables are coming up the street, and the red-coats wid them; and it's in Newgate the captain will be again before another half hour's gone by. And bad-luck to him!'

'You've informed against him?'

It was true. There came the noise as of many voices in the street, the assembling of a crowd, the tramp of a file of soldiers, the loud knocking of the constables. They were of course admitted. How could their demands be resisted? And in five minutes Captain Blackmore's singing was interrupted. He was a prisoner, pinioned, and in the custody of the officers of justice; the soldiers keeping guard without, and astounding the neighbourhood by their presence.

Then, greatly to his astonishment, Mr Cassidy found himself also recognised and arrested upon a charge similar to that he had been at pains to bring against Captain Blackmore for being a convict at large in evasion of the sentence of the law.

'To think of that now!—to think of that now!' Mr Cassidy, his face very white, could find no other words to express his amazement and alarm at his treachery having thus so fatally recoiled upon himself. He stared round him, bewildered and terrified, while the constables secured him.

Captain Blackmore treated the matter mighty coolly. 'It serves you right, Thady,' he said. 'I hate a cur. I never thought very good of you; but I didn't think so bad of you as this comes to. I wish I'd drubbed you harder when I had the chance. I'd sooner be turned off twice over, as I shall be, when all's said, than turn stag, as you've done. But, Paddy-like, you've scuttled your own boat, and you'll go down with me.—Good-bye, doctor. Tom Blackmore's service to you. I'm sorry if I've been a trouble to you. I'd like to shake hands with you, if I could; but they've trussed me up so plaguy tight! My service to you, sir, and to Mr Selwyn.—Now, my noble gentlemen, I'm yours to command.'

And the prisoners were carried off, and lodged in Newgate, to be seen no more by Vicesimus Muspratt. He breathed freely again. 'At last, my house is my own, and my collection's safe,' he said with unfeigned thankfulness. He mused for some time, then sighed, and looked perplexed, and somewhat sad and anxious. At last, he sat down, wrote a hurried letter, and sent it by a

special messenger to Mr George Selwyn, at his house in Cleveland Row, St James's.

There was much joking at the clubs and chocolate-houses about this time. It was said that Mr Selwyn had been interceding for the lives of two condemned malefactors in Newgate; but no one could be found to credit the story; every one laughed at it. It was voted absolutely preposterous.

Yet, in due time, it was found that the king, on the advice of Mr Selwyn's friend, the Right Honourable Henry Fox (afterwards Lord Holland), Secretary of State, had been graciously pleased to remit the sentence of two condemned prisoners; in lieu of suffering at Tyburn, they were to undergo transportation to His Majesty's plantations in the West Indies. Were these Dr Muspratt's patients? At anyrate, nothing more was ever heard of them.

And the ingenious model, the advantages of which the doctor had explained to Mr Selwyn?

Well, I know not if it were the same precisely, but some few years later, a contrivance on a similar principle certainly came into use.

When my Lord Ferrers ended his days at Tyburn in 1760, I find it stated by an historian of the period, that there was, for the first time, employed an 'elegant invention,' called the *new drop*, 'by which,' records my informant, 'the use of that vulgar vehicle, a cart, or mechanical instrument, a ladder, is avoided; the sufferer being left suspended by the dropping down of that part of the floor on which he stands.'

Yet it was not until many years after the demise of Earl Ferrers that this new machine was employed at all generally. Probably, when the tree at Tyburn was finally abandoned (in 1784), and, in lieu, capital punishment was inflicted outside the walls of Newgate, the new drop became a settled institution of the state.

But Dr Muspratt was not then living; indeed, he had been, for long years, resting peacefully in Bunhill Fields' burial-ground.

THE WAITS.

WASHINGTON IRVING, describing his Christmas experiences at Bracebridge Hall, says: 'I had scarcely got into bed, when a strain of music seemed to break forth in the air just below the window. I listened, and found it proceeded from a band, which I concluded to be the waits from some neighbouring village. They went round the house, playing under the windows. I drew aside the window curtain to hear them more distinctly. The moonbeams fell through the upper part of the casement, partially lighting up the antiquated apartment. The sounds, as they receded, became more soft and ærial, and seemed to accord with the quiet and moonlight. I listened and listened; they became more and more tender and remote; and as they gradually died away, my head sank upon the pillow, and I fell asleep.' The midnight music that afforded Irving such pleasure, and still holds a place among our Christmas customs, dates from very olden days; but the custom was not originally peculiar to the great Christian festival, being common to all times and seasons.

The waits were once in constant attendance at court, indeed they formed part of the royal establishment. From the rules laid down for their guidance in the reign of Edward IV., we learn that

it was the duty of the waits to pipe the watch at every chamber-door within the precincts of the palace, four times during the winter nights, and three times during the shorter nights of the summer season, keeping a good look-out at the same time for 'pickers and stealers.' They took their meals in the hall with the minstrels, and received a nightly allowance varying according to the time of year. In summer, each wait was served with a loaf of bread, a gallon of ale, two pitch-candles, and a bushel of fuel; in winter, half a loaf, a gallon of ale, four candles, and a bushel of fuel. His wages were threepence or fourpence a day, according to his deservings, with clothing and bedding at the steward's discretion. If he fell sick, two leaves, two messes of meat, and a gallon of ale, were allotted to him. He shared with the rest of the royal household in any 'general gifts,' and acted as deputy for any yeoman of the household incapacitated for a time. He attended upon newly-made knights of the Bath during their vigil in the chapel, receiving for his fee all the watching-clothes donned for the occasion by the new member of the honourable order. The waits' services had risen considerably in money-value since the reign of Edward III., that king paying his three waits only twenty shillings a year, except in time of war, when their wages were raised to twelvence a day. Henry VI. seems to have found one wait sufficient for his needs; and although 'harpers, pipers, sagbuts, taberets, and lewters' figure among the three hundred servants of Henry VIII.'s establishment, only a single musician, one Andrew Newman, is specially designated as a 'wayte,' his services being remunerated at the rate of ten shillings and fourpence a month. There were no less than fifty-eight discoursers of sweet sounds in the household of Charles I., but not one of them is described as a wait, though, in all probability, a fair proportion officiated in that capacity.

The city of London, from very early times, maintained a company of waits, who, clad in blue gowns with red sleeves, and wearing silver badges suspended from their silver collars, attended the lord-mayor when he went in public procession, and, as a matter of course, played their part at the civic banquets. They also attended the funerals of great citizens, and marched with the Midsummer Watch. Although servants of the chief-magistrate, they were not above receiving gratuities, for, in the Household Book of Lord Howard (1481-3) we find the following entries: 'Payd the waytes of London, 12d.' 'Be my Lady's handes to my Lord Mare's mynstrells, 3s. 4d.' 'my Lady being evidently more liberal of largesse than my Lord. My lord-mayor's minstrels seem to have had a tolerable reputation for musical skill, since Morley, in dedicating his *Consort Lessons* to the lord-mayor and aldermen in the year 1599, does not hesitate at complimenting them on that score. He says: 'As the ancient custom of this most honourable and renowned city hath ever been to retain and maintain excellent and expert musicians to adorn your Honours' favours, feasts, and solemn meetings; to those, your Lordship's waits, I recommend the same.' Morley's *Lessons* were written for the treble and bass viols, the flute, the cittern or English guitar, the treble lute, and the pandora; so we may reasonably infer the city waits at least were competent to perform upon a greater variety of instruments than the hautboys of four different

sizes which made up a set of waits. One of them, Thomas Farmer, at anyrate, was musician enough to compose several good songs, and popular enough to be honoured by Purcell setting to music an elegy on his death. When it was proposed, in the parliament of 1656, to include fiddlers, harpers, and pipers among the rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars the wise men of that day determined to put down by the strong arm of the law, Alderman Hooke protested against the waits of the city being included in the proscription, on the ground that they were well known to be a great preservation of men's houses in the night—an argument affording sufficient evidence that the waits still acted in their original double capacity. Sixty-three years afterwards, they still existed, and Ned Ward, who calls them 'the topping tooters of the town, who have gowns, silver chains, and salaries for playing *Liliburlero* to my lord-mayor's horse through the city,' describes them as a parcel of strange hobgoblins covered with long frieze rugs and blankets, hooped round with leather girdles from their cruppers to their shoulders, having their noddles buttoned up in martial-looking caps.

Londoners wishing to celebrate a wedding with musical honours, to have a dance, or enjoy a little harmony of an evening, did not, however, depend upon the corporate musicians for the gratification of their desires; within the walls, every ward, without the walls, Westminster, Finsbury, Islington, Southwark, Stepney, the Tower Hamlets, and other districts, had their own particular band of waits, at the beck and call of any one able and willing to come to terms with them. We get some idea as to those terms from the dialogue between the Citizen and the Prologue in the Induction to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*—

Citizen. What stately music have you? You have shaums?

Prologue. Shaums? No!

Citizen. I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must needs have shaums. I'll be at the charge myself rather than we'll be without them.

Prologue. So you are like to be.

Citizen. Why, and so I will be. There's two shillings; let's have the waits of Southwark. They are as rare fellows as any in England, and that will fetch them all o'er the water, with a vengeance as if they were mad!

In 1704, the good people of Hackney complained that their parish was infested with itinerant musicians, who prowled about the neighbourhood after dark, and made the night hideous. To remedy the evil, Mr Tyssen, the lord of the manor, 'did in that year nominate, authorise, and license Hance Mullings, Charles Herrel, Ebenezer Dunkerley, and John Ballock, to be his waits and music, to play upon loud instruments in the night-time, within his manor during his pleasure; in the same manner as was used within the city of London, and in the manor of Stepney. And he required the said parties to be diligent in the discovery of all robberies and fires which might happen; and of all suspicious and disorderly persons exercising music in the night-time, not authorised by him; and to give notice thereof to the constable or head-borough, to the intent that such mischief might be prevented, and such disorderly and other persons apprehended, and brought before one of her majesty's justices of

the peace, to be dealt with according to law.' The loud music, we suppose, was intended to frighten evil-intentioned individuals, whose awe of the constable was not sufficiently great to prevent them preying upon the honestest part of the community; but the waits were hardly likely to discover many robberies when they took such pains to announce their presence.

At one time, there were few towns of any size or note (in England, that is to say—we cannot speak so confidently respecting the sister-kingdoms) but what supported a band of waits, sometimes in all the dignity of an incorporated company. Such the waits of Newcastle-on-Tyne claimed to have been time out of mind, although they had been unlucky enough to lose or mislay the charter of their society. In 1677, a new one was issued to them, appointing them 'a fellowship with perpetual succession.' By this document the company were enjoined to meet every year upon St James's Day, and elect two stewards, who might sue and be sued in the local courts of law. This charter conferred certain privileges upon the members of the society, or rather confirmed them in those they enjoyed under their ancient one; and forbade all strangers and non-members of the company (unless they obtained a special licence from the mayor), teaching music in the town, or playing at any wedding or merry-making within its precincts, under a penalty of six-and-eightpence. Nor could any fiddlers, pipers, dancers upon ropes, or 'others that pretended to skill in music, or went about with motions and shewes,' follow their irregular callings in Newcastle, without being mulcted in the sum of ten shillings—all such fines being paid over to the company whose rights had been infringed. 'Provided always, that the said waits and musicianers, and their successors for ever hereafter, be ready and attendant on all occasions to do and perform their duty in all matters and clauses belonging to their science and employment, and obedient to all orders of the mayor and aldermen.' One of the towers on the town-walls was appropriated to their use, and they received a small salary from the corporation—in Elizabeth's reign, the five waits received twenty pounds for a year's service. They seem, too, to have been supplied with instruments at the town's cost, at least they were so in 1655; and once in three years each wait was presented with a cloak costing three pounds. The Newcastle waits were not dissolved till the beginning of the present century, when their three-cocked hats and blue cloaks disappeared, as a local chronicler has it, 'amidst some modern narrow and gloomy schemes of economy.'

The Norwich waits—declared by Kemp the actor to be unsurpassed and unsurpassable, since every one of them was not only cunning in the management of wind and string instruments, but also capable of serving as chorister in a manner worthy of any cathedral—likewise had the advantage of being united into a company, governed by a headman, two wardens, and two searchers. These officers were to be changed annually; but, by a strange oversight, the selection of their successors devolved on them alone; the consequence being, that by interchanging offices with each other, instead of electing new holders, they managed to retain their places as long as it pleased them so to do. Musicians not belonging to the society were not permitted to play in the streets of Norwich, or any town in the county; the privileged ones per-

forming the usual duties in connection with corporation festivities, duties of which they were finally relieved in 1791. In ancient times, Norwich Castle had its own musical guard apparently, John le Marshal holding a certain manor from Edward I. by the service of paying one mark for guarding the castle 'from six weeks to six weeks,' and for 'wayte fee' at the said castle, 'fifteen shillings at four quarterly terms.'

The once famous fraternity of Minstrels of Beverley, said to have been first formed in the time of the Saxons, played at fairs, weddings, and feasts, under the direction of a leader, who was of necessity an alderman of the borough. They never waited to be invited to display their musical proficiency; free admission into the houses of the nobility and gentry was one of their traditional privileges, and they did not scruple to avail themselves of it. This ancient fraternity can scarcely be reckoned among the societies of waits, although they are designated as such in an order issued for the re-establishment of the guild in the reign of Philip and Mary; the Minstrels of Beverley ranked rather in the same category as the Chester Minstrels, who were licensed to carry on their vocation upon the simple condition of behaving themselves 'lively,' as minstrels ought to do.

In Elizabeth's reign, we find the corporation of Ipswich purchasing 'waits' for one Martin and his company of musicians, six all told, conditionally that the cash expended was to be repaid, if, at the end of the year, the towns-people expressed themselves dissatisfied with the performances of Martin and his men. The proviso proved unnecessary, for Martin held his post of leader of the waits until his death, when John Betts succeeded to the vacancy, and his company were bound to walk about the town with their waits from Michaelmas to Lady-day, starting at two o'clock in the morning, and continuing their march till they had thoroughly perambulated the town; for which service they were to receive four pounds per annum, and a convenient livery. In 1775, the Liverpool waits cost the corporation of that town twenty-four pounds. Richmond gave each member of its band a hat and cloak every year; other places provided their waits with blue cloaks; and in Leicester, a special tax seems to have been levied in their behalf, for in 1575, the authorities ordered that they should 'play orderly' every night and morning, in consideration of the rates exacted for their support from every householder of reasonable ability. Everywhere, however, they depended mainly upon what was called 'the benevolence' of their townsmen, eking out a living by performing at private houses. Among the items of expenditure in the household of Thomas Kytson, Esq., in 1574, was the payment of twenty shillings 'in reward to Richard Reede, one of the wayghtes of Cambridge, for his attendance in Christmas-time.' Another source of gain, of rarer occurrence, presented itself when any important personage happened to pay a visit to a town: the Canterbury waits got seven-and-sixpence from Henry VIII. when he passed through their town on his way to Dover, and when he returned a month afterwards, were rewarded, for displaying their loyalty and skill, by another gift of eighteen shillings and eightpence. The Liverpool waits had one way of extracting cash out of folks peculiar to themselves, it being their habit to go to the house of the master of any newly arrived vessel the day after he came into port, and

in jubilant strains congratulate him upon having brought his voyage to a happy conclusion. With the dissolution of the waits, courtship lost one of its most ancient features; the serenade so often alluded to by our older poets, became lost to the ladies for ever. A hundred and fifty years ago, no lover pretending to do things as they should be done, made love without it. 'As the custom prevails at present,' says the *Tatler*, 'there is scarce a young man of any fashion in a corporation who does not make love with the town-music. The waits often bring him through his courtship. One would think they hoped to conquer their mistresses' hearts as people tame hawks and eagles, by keeping them awake, or breaking their sleep.'

Of our modern Christmas waits, not much can be said; their spiriting is of a very prosaic order, although a little quaintness is infused into the performance here and there; in York, for instance, where, as a lady-correspondent of *Notes and Queries* tells us, the waits perambulate the principal streets for the five Mondays preceding the great festival, playing one tune, and one only, in each street, and then saluting the head of each house by name. When they came to St Mary's Convent, in which this lady was a boarder, after going through one tune by way of preliminary, a stentorian voice roared out: 'Good-morning to the Lady-Abbess! Good-morning to the nuns! Three o'clock in the morning; a fine morning! Good-morning to the chaplain! Good-morning to all! Good-morning! Good-morning!' Of course, all these greetings were given in lively expectation of favours to come, when the waits called some days afterwards for the customary acknowledgment of their claims for a Christmas-box.

It was the custom in a country town familiar to us in our youth to sit up for the minstrels who,

On a winter's night,
By moon or lantern light,

went their rounds through hail, rain, frost, or snow, and regale them with plenty of strong home-brewed, so liberally dispensed, that after a few such stoppages, exhilarated or something more by the good cheer, each musician asserted his independence by adopting original variations, the result being the production of effects more novel than pleasing. The scratch-bands perambulating through our streets at Christmas-tide may be but sorry shadows of their blue-cloaked namesakes; they may 'crack the voice of melody, and break the legs of Time,' until

Poor *Home*, *Sweet Home* would seem to be
A very dismal place;
Your *Auld Acquaintance* all at once
Is altered in the face.

Yet, despite their sins of commission and omission, we should grieve at their becoming extinct. Their labours are rewarded meagrely enough, goodness knows, and at this season we cannot begrudge them a pittance. The 'Autocrat of the Breakfast-table' himself would assuredly yield to the influence of Christmas-tide, and unbutton his pockets in behalf of the waits, although he has written—

If you are a portly man,
Put on your fiercest frown,
And talk about a constable
To turn them out of town;
Then close your sentence with an oath,
And shut the window down.

And if you are a slender man,
Not big enough for that,
Or if you cannot make a speech
Because you are a flat,
Go very quietly, and drop
A button in the hat!

PROVIDENCE.

THE wise observe their brethren, and withhold
The quick reflection in their breast untold:
Their prudence tests the purpose of each word,
Lest self-complacence be to use preferred;
They balance anger with a phrase of skill,
And lead obedient the ungoverned will:
They warn and chafe not, while an impress deep
Of their own spirit makes suspicion sleep;
Sifting they drop a jewel in the sieve,
And seem to find the sentiment they give.

Thus mortals imitate the immortal Mind;
Though oft perplexed by issues undesigned:
An unknown step to left or right may change
The bubble's colour in the sunbeam's range;
A minute scorned its web of error weave;
A speech intent on pleasing vex or grieve.
Among so many, who the end can choose
That draws the line without a knot or noose?

The wise think deep; they sow, they irrigate;
The watchman watches early, watches late;
But who can shew a rule the blind may follow
Safe to the end through mazy wood and hollow?
Who make the green blade pierce the heavy clod,
Who keep the city but the Unseen God?

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